

What is claimed is:

1. A plant package comprising a potted plant and a cover, the plant package produced by the method comprising the steps of:

    providing a potted plant comprising a pot and a botanical item;

    providing an automatic covering apparatus for automatically

        applying a cover about the potted plant, the cover having an  
        interior space;

    transferring the potted plant to the automatic covering apparatus;

    automatically applying the cover about the potted plant by non-  
        manually disposing the potted plant into the interior space of  
        the cover; and

    bonding the cover about the potted plant via a bonding material.

2. The plant package of claim 1 wherein the method of producing the plant package comprises the additional step of sorting the potted plant into one of at least two grades in accordance with a predetermined grading criterion.

3. The plant package of claim 2 wherein in the method of producing the plant package the step of sorting the potted plant occurs before the step of automatically applying the cover.

4. The plant package of claim 2 wherein in the method of producing the plant package the step of sorting the potted plant occurs after the step of automatically applying the cover.

5. The plant package of claim 2 wherein in the method of producing the plant package the step of sorting the potted plant comprises using an automatic sorting apparatus to sort the potted plant.

6. The plant package of claim 1 wherein in the method of producing the plant package in the step of applying the cover, the cover is a preformed cover provided by an automatic cover supplying apparatus which retrieves the cover from a set of preformed covers and places the cover in an application position.

7. A plant package comprising a potted plant and a cover, the plant package produced by the method comprising the steps of:

    providing a potted plant comprising a pot and a botanical item;

    providing an automatic covering apparatus for automatically applying a cover about the potted plant, the cover having an interior space;

    transferring the potted plant to the automatic covering apparatus;

    automatically applying the cover about the potted plant by non-manually disposing the potted plant into the interior space of the cover; and

    bonding the cover about the potted plant via a band.

8. The plant package of claim 7 wherein the method of producing the plant package comprises the additional step of sorting the potted plant into one of at least two grades in accordance with a predetermined grading criterion.

9. The plant package of claim 8 wherein in the method of producing the plant package the step of sorting the potted plant occurs before the step of automatically applying the cover.

10. The plant package of claim 8 wherein in the method of producing the plant package the step of sorting the potted plant occurs after the step of automatically applying the cover.

11. The plant package of claim 8 wherein in the method of producing the plant package the step of sorting the potted plant comprises using an automatic sorting apparatus to sort the potted plant.

12. The plant package of claim 7 wherein in the method of producing the plant package in the step of applying the cover, the cover is a preformed cover provided by an automatic cover supplying apparatus which retrieves the cover from a set of preformed covers and places the cover in an application position.

13. A plant package comprising a potted plant and a cover, the plant package produced by the method comprising the steps of:

providing a potted plant comprising a pot and a botanical item;

providing an automatic covering apparatus for automatically applying a cover about the potted plant, the cover having an interior space;

transferring the potted plant to the automatic covering apparatus;

automatically applying the cover about the potted plant by non-manually disposing the potted plant into the interior space of the cover; and

bonding the cover about the potted plant via a tie.

14. The plant package of claim 13 wherein the method of producing the plant package comprises the additional step of sorting the potted plant into one of at least two grades in accordance with a predetermined grading criterion.

15. The plant package of claim 14 wherein in the method of producing the plant package the step of sorting the potted plant occurs before the step of automatically applying the cover.

16. The plant package of claim 14 wherein in the method of producing the plant package the step of sorting the potted plant occurs after the step of automatically applying the cover.

17. The plant package of claim 14 wherein in the method of producing the plant package the step of sorting the potted plant comprises using an automatic sorting apparatus to sort the potted plant.

18. The plant package of claim 13 wherein in the method of producing the plant package in the step of applying the cover, the cover is a preformed cover provided by an automatic cover supplying apparatus which retrieves the cover from a set of preformed covers and places the cover in an application position.

19. A plant package comprising a potted plant and a cover, the plant package produced by the method comprising the steps of:

- providing a potted plant comprising a pot and a botanical item;
- providing an automatic covering apparatus for automatically applying a cover about the potted plant, the cover having an interior space;
- transferring the potted plant to the automatic covering apparatus;
- automatically applying the cover about the potted plant by non-manually disposing the potted plant into the interior space of the cover; and
- bonding the cover about the potted plant via a ribbon.

20. The plant package of claim 19 wherein the method of producing the plant package comprises the additional step of sorting the potted plant into one of at least two grades in accordance with a predetermined grading criterion.

21. The plant package of claim 20 wherein in the method of producing the plant package the step of sorting the potted plant occurs before the step of automatically applying the cover.

22. The plant package of claim 20 wherein in the method of producing the plant package the step of sorting the potted plant occurs after the step of automatically applying the cover.

23. The plant package of claim 20 wherein in the method of producing the plant package the step of sorting the potted plant comprises using an automatic sorting apparatus to sort the potted plant.

24. The plant package of claim 19 wherein in the method of producing the plant package in the step of applying the cover, the cover is a preformed cover provided by an automatic cover supplying apparatus which retrieves the cover from a set of preformed covers and places the cover in an application position.